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## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We have been reluctantly obliged, from want of space, to postpone several valuable communications till our next number.

To diminish the chance of disappointment, all letters should be forwarded to the office by the first day of the month.

All letters to be addressed to the Editor, 9, Upper Sackville-street.

Contributors of £1 per annum will be furnished with six copies, any of which will be forwarded, as directed, to nominees of the subscriber.

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## The Catholic Layman.

DUBLIN, FEBRUARY 19, 1857.

THE lot of Pope Pius IX. has fallen in disastrous times. The ink is scarcely dry on one of the addresses, or allocutions (as they are termed), in which his Holiness records his lamentations over the "innumerable wrongs inflicted on the Church," and "the most grievous condition to which (the Roman Catholic) religion is reduced" in one country, before a new allocution becomes necessary to proclaim still greater disasters in another.

It is not long since *Spain* and *Portugal* were the special subjects of one of these sorrowful revelations. The state of *Sardinia* and *Piedmont*, which for some time has been one of open revolt against the Holy See, was the theme of another; and it was only on the 26th of July, 1855, that Pope Pius announced to the world his "vehement anxiety and solicitude at the most grievous condition to which our most holy religion was reduced in *Switzerland*, and the almost innumerable wrongs there inflicted by the temporal power on the Church, its sacred authority, its rights of property, bishops and ministers."

The state of the universities in *Belgium* has still more recently been the subject of grievous sorrow to the holy Pontiff; and we have now before us a new allocution delivered by the Pope, in Secret Consistory, no later than the 15th of December last, in which fresh defalcations from the ranks of ecclesiastical obedience are made the subject of fresh lamentations, and the wrongs done to the "supreme authority" of the Holy See most pathetically bewailed and made known to the Christian world.

The objects lamented over in the present allocution are no less than the important republic of Mexico, in North America, and the various independent South American states, which formerly were under the rule of Spain, all of which now seem to be irretrievably lost to the so-called Apostolic See.

We wish we could afford space to give our readers the whole of this important document, but we think even a few brief extracts will suffice to show the nature and extent of the disasters lamented, as well as the nature and extent of the powers claimed by the See of Rome, wherever there is the faintest hope that such pretensions would be submitted to by any considerable portion of the population; as also the sort of civil and religious liberty which would be allowed to exist in our own country, were the authority of the Roman Pontiff acknowledged here as supreme.

The present Allocution commences thus:—  
"We had believed, Venerable Brethren, that We should never be compelled, to the great grief of Our heart, to lament and to complain that the rights of the Catholic Church in the Republic of Mexico have been severely wounded and trampled on.

"As soon as the new government was formed, it immediately declared war against the Church, her sanctuaries, her rights, and her servants. For, after it had deprived the clergy of its double vote at popular elections, it put forth a law, on the 23rd of November of last year, by which it destroyed the ecclesiastical tri-

bunals which had always existed in the whole Republic of Mexico, and declared that it would never subject its proceedings to the supreme authority of the Holy See.

"The Mexican Government went further, and on the 25th of June in that year it passed a decree, which it published on the 28th of that month, and in which it feared not to rob the Church of all her property and possessions in that state.

"The Mexican Government not only despised and rejected the reclamation of the chief pastors, but also resolved that the Bishop of Guadalajara should be punished with banishment, and that the law should be quickly and strictly executed."

The Pontiff then proceeds to lament especially that there were not wanting members both of the religious orders and of the secular clergy, "who, unmindful of their position and office, have abandoned the cause of the Church, and have not scrupled to obey the will of the Government, and put in practice this most unjust law."

The Pope then goes on as follows:—

"Meanwhile, the Mexican Government put forth other decrees, by one of which it repealed a law for the recall of a certain religious society (the Jesuits?), and by another declared that it would give support and help to all members of orders of both sexes who would renounce the conventual life, forsake their monasteries, and withdraw themselves from obedience to their superiors.

"But even this was not enough, for the then assembled National Convention, by the vote of the Deputies, amid very many blasphemies and insults against our most holy religion, its consecrated servants and chief pastors, and the Vicar of Christ upon earth, passed a new constitution which, among other articles, contains several which are entirely opposed to our Divine religion, its salutary doctrine, its holy institutions and rights. For by this new constitution, among other things, every privilege of the Ecclesiastical Forum is destroyed, and it is forbidden to every one to bind himself by any obligation, or a religious vow; and in order to corrupt the more easily the morals and the hearts of the people, and to spread more widely the abominable and horrible pest of indifference (query toleration?), and to subvert our holy religion, the FREE EXERCISE OF EVERY FORM OF WORSHIP IS GRANTED, and full permission is given to all FREELY AND OPENLY TO PUBLISH every sort of opinions and views."

That religious toleration and freedom of the press should form essential parts of the new Constitution of Mexico is, of course, too bad to be tamely borne (if it were in his power to prevent it) by the supreme head of a religion which considers intolerance a paramount duty, and freedom of the press incompatible with its own existence; and, therefore, after telling us that "the clergy of St. Angelo and their Vicar-General most urgently (but in vain) prayed and entreated the Chamber of Deputies that, at least, the article on the freedom of the practice of every religion should not pass into a law, the holy Pontiff proceeds stoutly to perform his duty in the trying emergency, and with one stroke of his supreme pen (as far as in him lies) erases from the Mexican Constitution the obnoxious and pestilential elements of "religious toleration" and a "free press," in a style worthy of the legitimate successor of the illustrious Hildebrand, though, happily, with less power to carry his will into practical execution.

"From these very lamentable facts which We have recorded here with pain, you clearly see, Venerable Brethren, how much our holy religion has been persecuted and oppressed by the Mexican Government, and what grievous affronts have been offered by it to the Catholic Church, and to Our supreme authority, and that of the Holy See. But far be it from Us that We should ever omit to fulfil the duty of Our Apostolic office on occasion of so great a devastation of the Sanctuary, and of such grievous oppression of the Church, of her power, and of her freedom. Therefore, in order that the faithful who reside there may know, and that the whole Catholic world may learn that we emphatically reject all which has been done by the leaders of the Mexican Republic against the Catholic religion and Church, and against the authority of the Holy See, We uplift in this your high assembly, OUR SUPREME PASTORAL VOICE with Apostolic candour, and sentence, condemn, and DECLARE WHOLLY NULL and of no effect all the above-mentioned DECREES, and everything else which has been done there by THE TEMPORAL POWER, to the great contempt of ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITY, and of this Apostolic See. Moreover, We most earnestly admonish all those through whose labour, counsel, and order these things have been done, to ponder well the censures and penal-

ties which are denounced by the Apostolic Constitutions and by the Holy Decrees of Councils against the invaders and assailants of the most sacred persons and things, and against those who permit themselves to attack the rights of the Holy See."

The griefs of the Holy Father are not yet all told, and, turning from the continent of North America to the shores of the great Southern Continent of the New World, without even pausing to take breath, he thus resumes his sad narration:—

"With no less grief are We filled, Venerable Brethren, at the very grievous wrongs whereby the Church is most lamentably oppressed and ill-treated by the temporal power in most of the countries of South America, formerly subject to the kingdom of Spain.

"For in those countries the temporal power assumes the right to name the bishops. . . . The bishops are forbidden to condemn freely un-Catholic writings, and are not even permitted, without the consent of the Government, to publish the Apostolic Letters. Moreover, the freedom of the Church in the acquisition of property is limited; the fulfilment of the indulgences proceeding from this Apostolic See is impeded. In the Ecclesiastical Seminaries the course of studies to be introduced is subjected to the temporal power, and the duty has been imposed on the Bishops and Ecclesiastics of swearing to sundry things which are contained in the Constitution, and which are in opposition to the rights of the Church. A new mode for the election of bishops is prescribed by the civil government; all the impediments to marriage fixed by the Church are not recognized, all indulgences proceeding from the Pope are declared absolutely null, if they have not been applied for by the Government, and none of the Religious Orders may admit any one to take the solemn vows without leave from the Government. In other countries of South America, the temporal power has gone so far in its arrogance that it dares to subject to its own authority the holiest spiritual things, which depend solely and singly on the will of the Bishops. How much We must reject and detest these things, which, with incredible sorrow of heart, We have here recounted, you, Venerable Brethren, know right well; for by such unjust assumptions the temporal power seeks to attack, to destroy, and trample on the divine edifice of the Church, her most holy doctrine, her venerable authority and discipline, and all the rights of the Church, and the supreme dignity and power of this Apostolic See."

Lamentable and intolerable, however, as all this must appear to the soi-disant "Vicar of Christ" upon earth, the sad narrative is not yet complete; for, turning his eyes from the Andes to the Alps, the dismayed Pontiff sees nothing but further calamities and indignities there also awaiting him, and he thus proceeds:—

"You also know well, Venerable Brethren, how vehement is our anxiety and solicitude at the most grievous condition to which our most holy religion is reduced in Switzerland; and you, no doubt, remember that in our address in the Consistory, held on the 26th day of July in the last year, We briefly mentioned the almost innumerable wrongs then inflicted by the temporal power on the Church, its sacred authority, its rights, property, bishops and ministers. We purpose, when we shall deem it opportune, to deliver a special address on this most painful theme, particularly as in those countries multiplied and detestable attacks upon the Church have increased and strengthened from day to day. Meanwhile, we cannot control Ourselves from most deeply lamenting, blaming, and condemning the perverse conduct of a few (?) ecclesiastics who do not shrink from aiding the nefarious attempts of the temporal power, and (especially in the Canton of Tessin)\* from giving the greatest scandal to all good Catholics, and rousing against themselves the indignation of God. We are sustained by the hope that in time the rulers of those regions will adopt wiser counsels, and will learn that the true happiness and prosperity of a people cannot exist without Our divine religion and its salutary doctrine."

We have scarcely the heart to deprive the Holy Father of the faint ray of hope which seems to sustain him amidst these multiplied calamities and disasters, but we must in all sincerity express our conviction, that if his Holiness's only point of hope is, that the inhabitants of either Mexico or Peru, Spain or Italy, Belgium or Switzerland, may at length, after so many centuries of the fullest experience of what

\* Some of our readers may remember that about five years ago his Holiness attempted a similar exercise of "Pastoral authority" against the Republic of New Granada. (See the CATHOLIC LAYMAN of February, 1853, vol. II, p. 19.) Can any of our readers explain to us, how it has come to pass, that in spite of the Allocution of the 27th of September, 1852, the three great bulwarks of civil and religious liberty—Freedom of Education, Liberty of the Press, and Rights of Worship according to each man's conscience, still exist in New Granada?

\* The Italian Canton of Ticino.

\* Our readers may see this Allocution in full in the Tablet of the 17th and 24th Jan., 1857, pp. 41 and 57. With what object such disastrous revelations are published to the world, we are somewhat at a loss to discover.

the yoke of Rome really is, make the tardy discovery that "the true happiness or prosperity of a people cannot exist without the Roman Catholic religion, and submission to the Roman See," his prospects for the future are but gloomy indeed!

Whether the prospects of Pio Nono in his own capital are much more cheering may be the subject of serious doubt. The correspondent of the *Tablet* thus writes from the spot so lately as the 20th January last:—

"On Saturday afternoon, Count de Goyon made a formal inspection of the French troops in Rome. They were drawn up in line on the slopes of the Pincian Hill, and after the inspection they all defiled past the General in the Piazza del Popolo. An English officer who was present computed their strength at something less than 4,000 men. As hitherto the French army of occupation has been rather kept out of sight than displayed, a variety of motives have been attributed for this conspicuous parade within the walls of the city; but as the General had never seen them all together before, and this is a convenient place for inspecting them, it seems scarcely necessary to search for any secret motive. The news from Naples is very alarming \* \* \* and many have thought, on account of the rumours from Naples, that the French review was a demonstration in favour of order."—*Tablet* of 7th Feb., 1857.

Can any of our Roman Catholic readers tell us why there should be "an army of occupation" at Rome? Is it that having discovered by long and intimate experience "that the true happiness and prosperity of a people cannot exist without the salutary doctrines" of the Papal See, the inhabitants of Rome are apprehensive that if they had not some such protection of their long enjoyed "happiness and prosperity" as the French army affords them, their revered Pontiff might be ruthlessly abducted from the eternal city, and be compelled to establish his throne henceforth, as "the vicegerent of Christ upon earth," among the mountains of Switzerland, or on the plains of Mexico? or is the true solution of the question to be found in the passage which we quoted from the *Rambler* of December last, in which it announced as a matter too notorious to be disputed that—

"The exclusive system has so utterly failed in retaining the allegiance of the middle and upper classes of Italy, taken as a body, and of many of the lower classes also, that no one would be surprised to see a storm of ignorant brutal fury burst upon the rulers and priesthood of the Church, even more savage and wicked than that which constituted what they call the Reformation of the 16th century?"

The Inquisition at Rome has prohibited and condemned the pastoral instructions of the Archbishop of Utrecht, and the Bishops of Haarlem and Deventer, who are all opposed to the new dogma of the Immaculate Conception. These three prelates belong to what is called the Jansenist party of the Roman Catholic Church in Holland.

## THE DUMB VILLAGE.

CHAP. VII.

"This difficulty," replied Father M., "is new to me, and I confess I cannot see how it is to be answered. Yet it sounds somewhat strangely to say it is impossible to prove infallibility."

"Pardon me, dear sir," answered Mr. R., "I have never said or thought it was impossible to prove infallibility. For this would be a grievous error. Our blessed Lord was infallible. His Apostles, as teachers inspired by the Holy Ghost, were so. What I have asserted, therefore, is not, that infallibility is incapable of proof, but that it is impossible for the Church of Rome to establish that she is infallible. My present position is very simple, and I am very anxious you should clearly understand it; because I think it goes to the root of the matter, and cannot, so far as I see, be answered. You and all Roman Catholics are aware that the Church of Rome denounces the use of private judgment as dangerous, and productive of certain error. She maintains, as you know, that heresy and schism are the sure results of it, and engrafs thereon her favourite argument for the necessity of an infallible authority, to prevent the evils, by prohibiting, on all matters of faith, the exercise of (in her view) so dangerous a liberty. That her arguments against it are bad, I have not the least doubt. But, bad or good, they preclude her from using what she denounces, in proof of a doctrine which she holds. I go

farther, you perceive, than to assert only—it is impossible for her to prove this claim. For, I say in addition, that it is inconsistent in her to attempt it. She has bound herself to make good this claim, excluded by her own statements from using private judgment, or, if she uses it, subjecting this, her cardinal doctrine, to all the uncertainty attending that mode of proof which she alone, of all Churches, expressly denounces. That she cannot use any other mode of proof, we have seen. Therefore, her attack on private judgment makes it impracticable for her to prove her infallibility. But it does more. For, as I have said, it excludes her, if she is consistent, even from attempting it. The proper use of men's reason is either to be trusted in matters of faith (as in everything else), or it is not. If it is to be trusted, then the great argument for the necessity of infallibility goes to the winds. If it is not, then the possibility of proving the doctrine utterly fails. She, least of all Churches, is able to provide a remedy for the evils which she asserts to exist. She, most of all Churches, is affected by every disparagement of private judgment. For its dangers (allowing them to exist), however injurious to others, are absolutely fatal to her. She has, then, no option but in retracting her attack on the reason which God gave men, but of which she would deprive them. If she wants to be Catholic, she must first become Protestant, and cease to be singular in inconsistency, by first ceasing to be singular in doctrine."

"Is it," said Father M., "quite fair to say that the Church of Rome cannot even attempt to prove her infallibility, save by employing what, I must admit, she does peremptorily condemn—the exercise of private judgment on matters of faith. Her argument is, as you very well know, the concurrent testimony of all ancient writers of the Church?"

"I know it well," replied Mr. R.; "but it only makes matters worse and worse. Since to irrelevancy of argument, it superadds a false allegation of facts. That no such testimony exists, or can be produced, is perfectly certain. That she has never yet adduced even one honest, unmistakable assertion of any accredited writer of the early Church, testifying to the acknowledgment of her infallibility, is notorious to all who have ever fairly looked into the subject. She can end the dispute between us at once, if her assertion be really true. Let her give us, if she can, a list of clear passages, beyond suspicion of fraud, and beyond reasonable doubt of their meaning. She never does anything of the kind. But instead thereof, presents us with extracts which she alleges to be satisfactory witness. Is not this very like assuming what she does not, at least always, claim, i.e., infallibility as to matters of fact, in order to prove what she does claim, i.e., infallibility as to matters of doctrine? Is not this to take her own word as the guarantee for her own claims. Just as if one were to assert—'No gentleman would act in this way, and then give as proof of the assertion—because any one who acts in this way is not a gentleman.' The Church of Rome rolls over and over again in the same sophism. Man's judgment is either to be trusted, or it is not. If it be, the necessity for an infallible guide disappears. If it be not, the proof of its existence in any particular body is impossible. It is inconsistent and suicidal in the Church of Rome to make the attempt at this proof, and it is impracticable for her to effect it. Her argument for the indispensableness of infallibility in general destroys the possibility of proving that she possesses it. Thus, she has girdled herself in a circle of fire which she cannot overpass, and woven with her own hands a net to entangle herself."

"I do certainly feel the power of this argument," said Father M., who had at last seen that it struck at the very heart of his Church's pretensions. "I do see now, for the first time, that the Church of Rome must use, and cannot avoid using, what she condemns. It is clearly impossible to exclude men's private judgment in matters of religion."

"Of course it is," replied Mr. R. "How can any one know that infallibility was promised to a Church at all, unless you use it. And how can the Church of Rome make good her claim to be that Church without it. She uses herself, without scruple, what she condemns in others. Now, then, if she must do it, and cannot help doing so, both the necessity for infallibility (as an interpreter of Scripture) and the possibility of proving it fall together to the ground."

"I fear so," said Father M.; "and, perhaps, you have taken the best plan of pressing this preliminary difficulty."

"I do so, because I do not like tilting with straws, when I have weapons of proof. But now look at it in another aspect, just to see the extent to which the Church of Rome really allows the use of private judgment on her fundamental doctrine of infallibility. Is it not a known matter of fact that no Roman Catholic can produce an accredited decision of his Church declaring where infallibility can be found?"

"There is none that I know of," said Father M.

"It has always seemed strange to me," replied Mr. R., "that such indecision in fixing the locality of infallibility has not been felt to be, what it clearly is, a *reductio ad absurdum* against the claim itself. But take any of the different views current in the Church of Rome that you please—say your own view, which is, if I mistake not, that when the pontiff assents to the decree of a Council on a matter of faith, that such decision is infallibly true."

"I have inclined to that view, as it appears to me the most reasonable," said Father M.

"Your 'criterion of infallibility' then is, the approbation by a pontiff of the doctrinal decrees of a general Council."

"That was my view," said Father M.

"Now, may I ask you," continued his questioner, "where is your authority for this opinion. Has any general Council, sanctioned by a pontiff (your own criterion), ever declared that such was the criterion of infallibility?"

"I know of none," was the answer.

"Then, if the Roman Catholic Church generally holds this opinion, as I believe it does, it holds it without having that very guarantee for its truth which it asserts to be the only guarantee for truth. Or, in other words, any member of your Church who holds this view (and the same argument will, of course, apply to any other one), holds it without the sanction of that which is to him indispensable to authenticate every doctrine."

"The Catholic Church has not made any adjudication on the subject," said Father M.

"Just so. She leaves you here to yourself. She allows you to exercise your own judgment. Provided you only allow in words that infallibility is somewhere or other, it matters but little where you locate it. Let us, however, look at the consequences of such indecision. Suppose you deny the pope to be personally infallible, is there any authentic declaration of your Church to condemn you for such denial?"

"None that I have ever heard of," replied Father M.

"Suppose you now deny a general Council to be infallible, would you be condemned as a heretic?"

"I should think so."

"By what authority, may I ask?"

"By that of the Church itself, I suppose," said Father M.

"I have little doubt you would soon meet with some close questioning about your orthodoxy. But, if the Church itself cannot produce the decree which has declared the decision of a general Council to be the criterion of infallibility, I am at a loss to see how you can be condemned as a heretic for denying that which has never been made an article of faith. In the same way, if there be no decision of your Church asserting the criterion of infallibility to be the sanction of a Council by a pontiff, why may you not deny this, as well as the former? And, if you are at liberty to deny each separately, why may you not safely deny them all? Your Church claims infallibility. Yet, she has never, so far as I know, officially localised it. Such irresolution evidences a conscious flaw in its theory. It looks very like a palpable admission that something is wrong, and that the subject won't bear examination. It is also an instance to show how your Church is forced to allow to her own members, what she condemns without measure in others."

Tom Connell had hitherto seemed more like a stone statue than a living man. He never once appeared to withdraw his eyes from Father M.'s face, in his intense desire to find there some evidence of the effect of Mr. R.'s arguments. His true heart had been deeply touched at perceiving the sad change which grief and mental disquiet had produced upon him. The pale, worn cheek, the favour of the clasped hands, the mute sorrow of the gentle face so clearly told their tale of a suffering spirit, that Tom's heart wept within him, and, in the tenderness of his strong nature, he yearned, as a mother does for her troubled child, that the weary soul might find rest at last. For this he was the more earnest, because he could not disguise the apprehension that Father M.'s evident weakness proved the heart sickness which smote him to have deeply, if not fatally, impaired his health. Hence Tom was the more anxious that his loved friend should feel the power, and enjoy the peace, of truth. In this earnestness of anxiety and hope, he might be said to have no other index of the effect of the rector's argument than Father M.'s face, from which his eyes never wandered. And his honest heart stirred with joy and thankfulness as he perceived, by the faint flush of pleasure which now and then stole over the wasted cheek, that the desert was beginning to blossom as a rose, and the solitary place to be glad.

In reality, Mr. R.'s mode of procedure had proved eminently useful. For it supplied just what was wanting, in order to get Father M.'s mind clear of some of the difficulties which still embarrassed him. Having, as we already stated, addressed himself to the task of examining the claims of his Church, he was struck with surprise and consternation at the extent to which the proofs adduced fell short of establishing the doctrines they were adduced to prove. At first he thought the fault must be in his own mind, and that some defect therein precluded him from understanding the force of arguments which others professed to receive as perfectly satisfactory. But how could this be? For he was conscious that he wanted to believe them, and, moreover, felt this inclination to be so strong as to make him even question the honesty of his purpose. The obstacle, then, could not be in himself. Closer scrutiny only brought graver doubts. His dissatisfaction was in proportion to his candour. Especially was he perplexed and pained to find this to be the case with the Scriptural arguments of his Church. Many a time did he lift up his eyes from the pages of her best controversialists, not merely in surprise, but in dismay, at the difficulties under which they laboured of extracting from a text the doctrine which it was asserted to con-